



Memorandum

TO: RULES COMMITTEE

FROM: Councilmember Sam Liccardo

SUBJECT: DOWNTOWN WIRELESS
NETWORK INCENTIVE

DATE: April 18, 2013

APPROVED: *Sam Liccardo*
RH

4-18-13

RECOMMENDATION

Direct staff to return to the Community & Economic Development Committee with a plan to leverage the donation of Ruckus Wireless boosters to incentivize and reward any business opening or hiring an employee in Downtown San José over a three-month period of time.

BACKGROUND

On March 14th San Jose celebrated the launch of downtown's Wickedly Fast Wi-Fi network, in partnership with Ruckus Wireless and SmartWAVE Technologies. Thanks to the technology of our partners, the new network delivers Wi-Fi speeds up to three to four times faster than conventional, existing Wi-Fi public networks across the country.

Ruckus Wireless recently donated 100 wireless boosters to the City for distribution. These wireless boosters allow the Downtown's Wickedly Fast Wi-Fi Network to be brought indoors.

I propose to leverage this new partnership to address the connectivity needs of entrepreneurs and small businesses downtown, while incentivizing economic growth. I recommend the City administration create a simple, new "boost" for Downtown businesses – hire just one new person, open a business Downtown, or renew a lease Downtown in the next three months, and the City will give your business a new booster, to bring this powerful Wi-Fi signal indoors for that business' employees and customers.

This incentive aligns with the City's Economic Strategy and staff's goal to position Downtown San Jose as an easy-to-access, competitive work environment for start-ups, scaling businesses, and freelancers by highlighting our innovation and creativity. And also the goal to retain, attract and grow business Downtown.

This effort also aligns with the StartUp San José initiative launched by Councilmembers Herrera, Campos, and myself, to help fill empty storefronts by waiving city permit fees in partnership with landlords willing to reduce their lease rates for small businesses.

In a time of limited resources, this is a simple way the City can reward creating a new job, starting a new business or bringing a company to San Jose. Though small, if incentives like this can help push a couple of small businesses beyond the "survive-to-thrive" tipping point, it will be well worth the effort.